

STRESS ON THE JOB: SOURCES AND SYMPTOMS

When you feel in control, no matter how challenging a situation may be, you don't feel stressed. Stress comes from all those things about your work over which you have little or no control. For example:

- ✂ Workload ✂ Deadlines
- ✂ Other people, who make demands or with whom you have conflicts
- ✂ Work-related problems
- ✂ Pressure to perform and meet goals

People with a strong need to feel in control generally suffer more from stress than those who have an easier time letting things go and going with the flow.

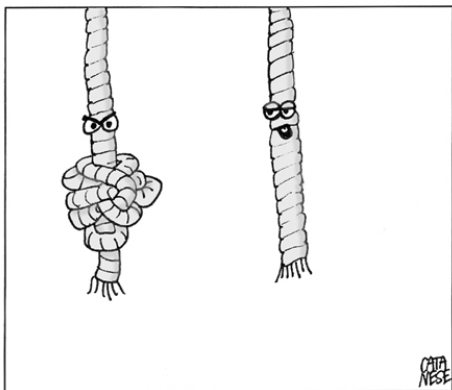
If you're the kind of person who likes to feel in control of his or her life and feels anxious when you're not, then you need to be extra careful about stress on the job.

You know you're getting stressed when you begin experiencing:

- ✂ Headaches ✂ Sleep disturbances
- ✂ Upset stomach ✂ Difficulty concentrating
- ✂ Short temper ✂ Job dissatisfaction
- ✂ Low morale

It's important to recognize what causes stress for you and what your symptoms are. It's also important to remember that if stress goes on long enough, it can make you sick or get you injured in a work accident.

Take steps to manage your stress so that you'll be focused and functioning, which is what you need to be to work safely and productively.



"Dude. You need to relax."

SafetyWorks

Marine Operations Center

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Tied Up in Knots?

10 steps for managing stress

Your body reacts to stress in many ways. For example, you may experience:

- Sweating
- Pounding heart
- Cold hands
- Knots in your stomach
- Muscle tension

If these symptoms are temporary, they are okay, but if stress goes on too long, your body suffers, and serious health problems can result, such as:

- Tension headaches
- Ulcers
- Heart disease
- Lowered resistance to all sorts of illnesses
- Insomnia
- High blood pressure
- Depression

Stress can also interfere with your ability to concentrate, which can put you at greater risk of having an accident on the job, at home, or on the road.

Although you may not be able to avoid stress, you *can* manage it. Here's how:

- 1. Get enough sleep.** Give your body a chance to pull itself together, especially when you're under pressure. Try to get seven or eight hours sleep per night.
- 2. Exercise regularly.** It helps relax muscle tension and makes you feel better.
- 3. Reduce consumption of alcohol, sugar, and caffeine.** The things we take to relieve stress often add to it.
- 4. Minimize the hassles.** Leave earlier for work to avoid rush hour traffic or take a less crowded route. Shop when stores are less crowded.
- 5. Set priorities.** No one can do it all—and certainly not all at once. Prioritize tasks and do them one at a time.
- 6. Try persuasion instead of confrontation.** A little give and take reduces much strain.
- 7. Share your problems.** Talk to a friend, family member, or professional counselor about things that are getting to you. Don't keep things bottled up.
- 8. Set aside time to relax.** Leave a little time each day to put your feet up and give your body time to unwind.
- 9. Watch out for making too many changes at the same time.** When you're facing big changes at work or in your personal life, wait for a while before taking on something else that's stressful.
- 10. Keep things in perspective.** Learn to laugh a little at all the things driving you nuts. It doesn't change anything, but it helps take the pressure off.



Alcohol and Safety

How to recognize a potential drinking problem

Alcohol abuse is a serious workplace safety problem. How do you know if co-workers have an alcohol problem? Look at their behavior.

Work Behaviors:

- Takes unnecessary risks
- Ignores safety rules
- Frequently late to work or absent
- Argues with co-workers and supervisor
- Has frequent accidents or near misses
- Shows poor judgment
- Less productive

Personal Behaviors:

- Has mood swings
- Overanxious
- Avoids or mishandles responsibilities
- Blames others for problems
- Oversensitive
- Lets appearance and grooming go

Drinking Behaviors:

- Drinks before work
- Drinks to avoid or solve problems
- Drinks to feel confident
- Becomes loud, angry, aggressive, or violent when drinking
- Feels remorseful after drinking
- Drinks alone
- Drinks to relax
- Forgets what happened while drinking

Since April is National Alcohol Awareness Month, this may finally be the time to address a co-worker with a drinking problem. Encourage the person to get help. You'll both be glad that you did—and you'll both be safer, too.

news & notes

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A SAFETY TRAINING SESSION

Safety training gives you a chance to gain the skills and information you need to do a safe job. That's why it's important to get the most from every training session.

But if you don't know what to look for going into a session, then you probably won't come out with what you need. Here's what to look for:

- **Training goals.** These are the things you need to know by the end of the session.
- **Training points.** These are the steps involved in performing a safety procedure or the main issues related to the safety information being presented. If the trainer doesn't provide a handout of these points, write them down yourself.
- **Opportunity to practice new safety procedures.** Take full advantage of the opportunity to practice with the trainer watching to give you feedback. Make sure you understand exactly what you are supposed to do and how to do it.
- **Chance to ask questions.** Never leave a session confused about any points or with any remaining questions about what you were supposed to learn.
- **Explanation of how to transfer skills to the job.** The whole point of training is to make use of what you learn when you go back to work. Be sure you understand exactly how you are supposed to use what you learned in training.

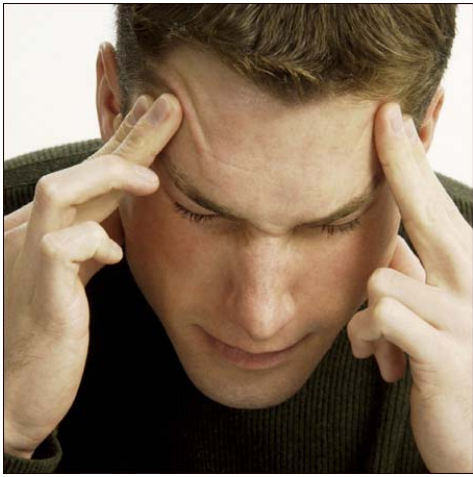
If a trainer doesn't tell you any of these things—or if it's not clear whether the trainer has told you—ask!

Don't Be an Easy Target

Make ATM withdrawals safely

Follow these precautions:

- ➔ Day or night, use ATMs in locations with which you are familiar and in which you feel safe. Avoid poorly lit or isolated locations.
- ➔ After dark, consider using an ATM inside your supermarket or gas station rather than an ATM at a closed bank building.
- ➔ Be aware of your surroundings. Look around before conducting a transaction. If you see anyone or anything suspicious, cancel your transaction and go to another ATM.
- ➔ Take your card out and have it ready so that you don't have to go through your wallet or purse to find it while standing at the ATM.
- ➔ If you use a bank ATM that requires a card to get in to the lobby, don't let anyone come in with you or after you. Tell them to use their own card.
- ➔ If the ATM is in an open area with others around, stand right in front of the machine to make sure no one can see you entering your PIN number.
- ➔ Don't count your money at the ATM and never walk away from an ATM with cash still in hand. Only count your money when you're safely back in your locked vehicle.
- ➔ Take your receipt—or don't ask for one.
- ➔ When making an ATM transaction from your car, be aware of your surroundings. Keep your eyes and ears open, and keep car doors locked.



Shed the Tension

A simple exercise for relieving stress right now

April is Stress Awareness Month and that puts the spotlight on a problem everyone experiences. So what can you do to relieve stress right now, this minute? Here's a simple exercise that you can do at your workstation, at home, in line at the bank—or practically anywhere. (Don't worry. Nobody will even notice what you're doing.)

It may not solve your problem, or get rid of the source of your stress, but it can make you feel better in just a few minutes. Here's what to do:

1. Concentrate on a spot just below your navel.
2. Take a deep, deep breath, expanding your lower abdomen (not your chest) right at that spot just below your navel.
3. Breathe in through your nose, filling up like a balloon with refreshing air.
4. Hold your breath for a count of two.
5. Slowly release the breath through your mouth to a count of four.
6. Make sure you completely empty your abdomen of air.
7. Take another deep breath.

Repeat this breathing cycle for a few minutes. You'll soon start to feel the tension falling away. As you breathe, let your body relax. Feel the tension leave your neck, shoulders, and back. Use this exercise any time you feel stressed. You'll feel a whole lot better in no time at all.

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Shiny Bright

Five steps to safety-proof your spring cleaning

If you're planning to do a little spring cleaning at work or at home, remember these steps for using **cleaning products safely**:

- STEP 1: Identify the hazards.** Read the label for hazards and precautions before you use any cleaning product (at work also check the MSDS). If the product contains hazardous chemicals, choose a safer and more environmentally friendly product, such as baking soda and/or vinegar.
- STEP 2: Follow all safety instructions.** Use only the concentration called for in label instructions, diluting when required. Use any personal protective equipment the label (and MSDS) recommend, such as rubber gloves and eye protection. Also follow instructions for disposal of wastewater and empty containers.
- STEP 3: Take only what you need from a container.** Keep containers closed when not in use.
- STEP 4: Make sure there is adequate ventilation.** Be careful when working in tight places like closets or other spaces with limited ventilation. Stay far enough away from the substance to avoid inhaling it. Get to fresh air quickly if you accidentally inhale strong vapors.
- STEP 5: Avoid direct skin contact.** When using cleaning products with hazardous chemicals, wear long sleeves and long pants. Make sure your feet are covered. Wash thoroughly after using cleaning products.

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SAFETY TRAINING FOR YOUR KIDS

To make sure your kids are safe when they perform hazardous tasks around the house, such as mowing the lawn or using tools in your workshop, remember these steps:

- ☞ Get them a list of safety precautions.
- ☞ Give them clear instruction.
- ☞ Ask them to repeat your instructions.
- ☞ Demonstrate how to perform the task safely and properly.
- ☞ Fit them with the necessary PPE, such as safety glasses, hearing protection, etc., and show them how to use it properly.
- ☞ Give them a chance to ask questions.
- ☞ Watch them perform the task and correct mistakes immediately.
- ☞ Keep an eye on them over the next few weeks while they perform the task.

APRIL IS CANCER CONTROL MONTH

The Bad News: Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, exceeded only by heart disease. One of every four deaths in the United States is from cancer. In 2004, a million and a half new cases of cancer were diagnosed, and over half a million Americans died of cancer—more than 1,500 people a day.

The Good News: Cancer is largely controllable through prevention, early detection, and treatment. According to the American Cancer Society, more people diagnosed with cancer are surviving each year, and 62 percent of cancer survivors are expected to live at least 5 years after diagnosis. There are over 10 million cancer survivors in the United States today.



Daily Inspection

Only PPE in good condition can protect you

Inspect your PPE before each use to make sure it really protects you. Look for:

Eye Protection:

- Excessive pitting or scratches on lenses. Get a new pair if you can't see clearly.
- Frames that are in good condition and that fit comfortably.
- Knotted, twisted, worn, or stretched goggle straps. Repair or replace them.

Hard Hats:

- Cracks, dents, or other damage on a daily basis.
- Worn or stretched headbands that need to be replaced.
- Cracked, broken, or punctured shells. In each case, replace the whole hat.
- Hats that take heavy blows need to be replaced even if they don't show damage.

Hearing Protection:

- Earmuffs or canal caps that are loose, cracked, or don't seal well. Don't use.
- Earplugs that are cracked, misshapen, or hard and inflexible. Don't use them.

Respirators:

- Tight connections.
- Holes, tears, or snags.
- Deterioration of rubber parts in the face piece and its seal, headband, valves, connecting tube, fittings, and canister or cartridge.
- Dents or corrosion in filters, cartridges, and canisters.

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MACHINE SAFETY TIPS

Machines can injure you when you get:

- Caught in and cut, crushed, or mangled by moving parts.
- Shocked by contact with live electrical parts.
- Burned by hot parts or hot machine fluids.
- Hit by materials or debris ejected by the machine.

Prevent machine accidents with these tips:

- ➔ Keep guards in place at all times. Never remove, disable, or reach through or around them.
- ➔ Check machinery before you use it to make sure it is in good working condition.
- ➔ Make sure it gets scheduled maintenance and necessary repairs.
- ➔ Know how to turn it off quickly in an emergency.
- ➔ Keep machines free of dirt and grease.
- ➔ Keep away from live energized electrical parts as well as hot parts.
- ➔ Keep hands, arms, feet, legs, hair, and clothing away from moving parts.
- ➔ Follow operating procedures and don't overload machinery.
- ➔ Wear assigned PPE, such as hearing and eye protection.

LOOK FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE SAFETY

Here's what you can do to improve safety:

- ✓ Take an active role in safety meetings and training sessions.
- ✓ Suggest safety improvements.
- ✓ Volunteer for safety committees.
- ✓ Cooperate in safety and health audits, inspections, and monitoring.
- ✓ Set a good example for co-workers.

Fire Safety

Remember these tips for preventing fires

Fire is always a risk in the workplace. That's because the three key ingredients of a fire—fuel, oxygen, and heat or ignition sources—are found in all work areas.

Here's how you can help prevent workplace fires:

- **Practice good housekeeping to keep fuels away from heat.** Dispose of combustible waste promptly and properly. Keep combustible materials away from heat, lights, machinery, and other ignition sources.
- **Follow fire safety rules.** Smoke only in designated areas and extinguish cigarettes, pipes, etc., as well as matches, carefully.
- **Identify and take precautions with flammable substances.** Check labels and material safety data sheets (MSDSs) to identify flammables. Keep them in approved airtight containers, and treat empty containers like full ones unless they are purged. Clean up spills and leaks immediately. Use flammables only in well-ventilated areas away from ignition sources.
- **Use and maintain electrical equipment properly.** Keep machines and motors well lubricated and clear of dust and grease. Replace worn or damaged cords and wires. Don't overload circuits, motors, or outlets.
- **Prevent fires that result from chemical reactions.** Read labels and MSDSs to make sure that you don't store or use incompatible chemical substances together.